CLAIMS LISTING

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15[[1]], wherein said ratio D(t)/D(b) is between 0.8 and 0.99.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of machining ~~wherein~~ the tubular ends ~~are machined~~ to [[a]] reduce[[d]] a wall thickness in ~~the~~ a welding zone.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 14, wherein the tubulars comprise a relatively lower grade steel base pipe and a relatively higher grade steel cladding on ~~the~~ an inner and/or outer surface of the base pipe and the first and second end faces are shaped such that when the tubular ends are pressed together the end faces of the cladding(s) touch each other before the end faces of the base pipe ends touch ~~each other~~.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[5]]14, wherein the ~~tubular ends~~ convex shape is ~~are~~ wedge shaped ~~and the tips of the wedges are formed by the claddings~~.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[1]]5, further comprising machining at least one of the first and second ends having cladding such that the base pipe is not exposed~~wherein~~

~~only the adjacent end portions of adjacent base pipes are covered with clad metal to allow further machining of said end portions without exposing the base pipes~~.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 5, further comprising flushing ~~wherein during at least part of the forge welding operation a flushing gas is flushed around the~~ a welding zone ~~and at least part of the~~ with a flushing gas [[is]] injected into the welding zone from ~~the~~ an uncladded side of the tubular, such that the ~~injected~~ flushing gas ~~can~~ continues to reach the ends of the still spaced base pipes after the c1addings have touched ~~each other~~.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the flushing gas is a reducing flushing gas.

10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein the flushing gas is a non-explosive mixture of an inert gas and a reducing gas.

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the inert gas is selected from the group consisting of~~comprises~~ helium, argon, nitrogen, and~~/or~~ carbon dioxide and the reducing gas is selected from the group consisting of ~~comprises~~ hydrogen, ~~and/or~~ carbon monoxide, and mixtures thereof.

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11, wherein the non-explosive flushing gas mixture comprises more than 90% by volume of an inert gas and at least 2% by volume of hydrogen.

13. (Canceled)

14. (New) A method for interconnecting a first tubular having a wall and a first end with a second tubular having a second end by forge welding, the method comprising:

forming the first end to include a first end face that is defined by a wall thickness of the tubular, the first end face having an annular convex shape;

forming the second end to include a second end face having an annular concave shape that is complementary to said convex shape, wherein at least one of the convex and concave shapes has a sloping configuration such that a first central axis of the at least one of the convex and concave shapes is angled toward a longitudinal axis of its respective tubular;

positioning the first end to be proximate to and in axial alignment with the second end;

heating the first and second ends such that the heated first and second ends deform due to thermal expansion, the first central axis of the at least one of the convex and concave shapes having the sloping configuration substantially aligning with a second central axis of the other of the convex and concave shapes and such that the convex shape may be pressed into the concave shape; and

pressing the convex shape into the concave shape to join the first and second ends.

15. (New) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of selecting the sloping configuration being selected such that the ratio between an average diameter D(t) of a tip of the convex shape and an average diameter D(b) of the tubular wall is related to an estimated

temperature difference between the tip and tubular wall and a thermal expansion co-efficient of the tubular end.

16. (New) The method of Claim 14, wherein the at least one of the first central axis and the second central axis is angled toward the longitudinal axis by approximately one degree to approximately five degrees.

17. (New) The method of Claim 14, further comprising the step of forming both the convex and concave shapes such that each of them has a respective axis that is angled toward a longitudinal axis of its respective tubular.